

Health Update:

CDC & Aventis Pasteur Announce Allocation Plan to Address Influenza Vaccine Shortages

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Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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SUBJECT: CDC & Aventis Pasteur Announce Allocation Plan to Address Influenza Vaccine Shortages

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Aventis Pasteur announced today the first phase of the plan to allocate influenza vaccine in response to the recently announced loss of half of the nation's expected flu vaccine supply for the 2004-2005 season. The plan, announced by CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding and Aventis Pasteur US President Damian Braga, calls for CDC to work closely with Aventis to distribute in phases 22.4 million doses of unshipped vaccine to identified areas of need throughout the country. Beginning immediately, about 14.2 million doses of vaccine will be allocated over the next 6-8 weeks through Aventis Pasteur contracts directly to high-priority vaccine providers, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, nursing homes, and private providers who care for young children.

"This plan will help ensure that vaccine gets to those people who need it most," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "This is a troubling, frustrating situation for all of us and we need for all Americans to pull together in the weeks to come to meet this challenge head on. This plan is the result of unprecedented collaboration between CDC, Aventis Pasteur, and state and local health departments across the country. And we must not forget the other public health heroes on the front lines in grocery stores, pharmacies, and health clinics working to prioritize vaccine."

CDC will continue to work with Aventis Pasteur and state and local health departments to identify people, by region, on the vaccination priority list. The approximately 8.2 million doses remaining after the first phase is completed will be shipped to other high-need areas. "Since Dr. Gerberding contacted us last week, we at Aventis Pasteur have worked with the CDC around the clock to tackle the complex task of getting millions of doses of influenza vaccine to thousands of health care providers around the country. Our goal has been to direct remaining doses as quickly as possible to those areas where large numbers of at-risk individuals are in need," said Damian Braga, president, Aventis Pasteur US. "It is a huge logistical feat and we are proud to have contributed our knowledge and expertise to this plan."

Last week CDC announced priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine for the 2004-2005 influenza season:

- * All children aged 6-23 months
- * Adults aged 65 years and older
- * Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- * All women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- * Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- * Children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- * Health-care workers with direct patient care
- * Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months

Influenza season typically peaks in the United States between December and March. Because each season is unpredictable, it's not known how severe the 2004-2005 season might be. Although vaccination is the best protection against influenza, everyone can take practical steps to help prevent spread of flu, such as avoiding close contact with people who are sick and keeping your distance from others if you're sick; when possible, staying home from work, school, and errands when you are sick; covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and washing your hands often.

Specific questions about influenza vaccine should be directed to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Service's Section for Communicable Disease Prevention at 573/751-6475.

Additional information about influenza and this year's vaccine recommendations is available from CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>.